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WORKERS WORLD

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## On May Day 2022

# Power in our hands

**By Minnie Bruce Pratt**

May Day 2022 marked a year when worker organizing crested in historic resurgence in the U.S.

Mass outrage against racism, embodied in earlier enormous Black Lives Matter protests, flowed into red-hot anger at the bosses' exploitation of workers' heroic frontline efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The result? Workers walked off their jobs by the millions, sometimes in spontaneous unified actions. Like the Burger King workers in Lincoln, Nebraska, who made it public July 2021 on the fast food giant's billboard: "We All Quit" — later citing long hours, low pay and 97°F kitchen temperatures.

Business media labeled this "The Great Resignation." But what rapidly became clear was that workers were barreling into "The Great Unionization."

A thousand United Mine Workers struck at their Brookwood, Alabama, coal mine on April 1, 2021 — putting them in direct confrontation with the mine's financial backer, international hedge fund BlackRock. The miners — still on strike this May Day — are only 30 miles away from Bessemer, where a solidarity rally was held that February for Amazon workers beginning a historic union drive at the warehouse there with support from the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU).

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NEW YORK CHAPTER
TWU UNION BUSTING DISGUSTING!
#JUST VOTE

On the streets of New York City, May Day 2022. WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

From last spring forward, bosses have been hit with an avalanche of organizing, including two earthshaking wins — the first union victory against the Starbucks coffee empire, by Starbucks Workers United in Buffalo, New York, and the first U.S. union victory against global conglomerate Amazon, by the Amazon Labor Union in Staten Island, New York.

Both of those were worker-led victories, crafted astutely by SWU and ALU — and that momentum is continuing. In a joint statement those unions called for all U.S. workers to come into the streets in worker solidarity and union activism: "MAY DAY! One working class united vs. union busters." (Workers World, April 21)

Following are some May Day moments from the U.S. working class in militant motion.

### New York City

A spirited rally and militant march took place in **New York City** May 1, organized by the Workers Assembly Against Racism. International speakers at historic Union Square — across the street from Whole Foods Market, owned by Amazon multibillionaire Jeff Bezos — ranged from the Philippines to Korea, from Brazil to the U.S. They included Memphis 7 workers fired by Starbucks, Beto Sanchez and LaKota McGlawn; Amazon Labor Union organizers Karen Ponce and Tristan Dutchin; Charles Jenkins, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Mahoma Lopez, Laundry Workers Center, and a delegation of mainly Guatemalan migrant construction workers; Chris Silvera, Teamsters Local 808; Victor Toro, former Chilean political prisoner under the Pinochet regime; Deborah Dickerson, Picture the Homeless; and Adriana Machado, Brazilian Workers Party. Cultural performers included the Rude Mechanical Orchestra and A Desalambrar, a Chilean musical group based in the South Bronx.

Marches then took to the streets, blocking traffic in all directions, and held a speak-out that included Brenda Stokely, International Working Women's Day Coalition; Omowale Clay, December 12th Coalition; and Larry Holmes from WAAR. The march ended at Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz's "mansion in the sky" — a penthouse at the former site of Saint Vincent Hospital's Emergency Wing in the West

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WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

Migrant construction workers demand safe working conditions, May 2, Brooklyn, New York.

# Biden, Pelosi, Austin declare war on Russia

**By John Catalinotto**

May 1 — After two months of war, the Biden administration, including the House of Representatives, the Pentagon and individuals connected to the intelligence establishment, have made it clear to the world that Washington plans a major war to wreck Russia. They demand that their imperialist allies join this war.

For the working class and all oppressed peoples within the U.S. and in Europe, recognizing this development as a threat to their own welfare and to their very existence is the important first step toward mobilizing antiwar resistance.

Even if a world conflagration is avoided, the working class in all countries involved will pay the costs of a protracted war in Ukraine. The diversion of government budgets to the war effort will diminish defense against COVID-19 and subsequent pandemics and sabotage programs aimed to soften the climate crisis.

### U.S. wants Russia 'weakened'

After visiting Kiev with Secretary of State Antony Blinken April 24, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said this to the

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# UArts rally for union rights and benefits

**By Joe Piette**
**Philadelphia**

Philadelphia University of the Arts workers, students and community members rallied April 27 in solidarity with staff seeking to unionize and with faculty still bargaining for their first contract after a successful union drive. Speakers at the rally of over 40 people included UArts faculty and staff union leaders, plus Pat Eiding, president of the Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO.

In November 2020 full-time and part-time faculty at University of the Arts voted with a historic 99% yes vote to unionize with United Academics of Philadelphia, a local of the American Federation of Teachers.

Faculty have been bargaining with the university and their Morgan Lewis lawyer for over a year, with only the most basic items agreed upon. Morgan Lewis is an anti-labor law firm, notorious for representing Amazon and many other corporations opposing the rights of workers to unionize.

Over 80% of UArts faculty are part-time with no benefits, hired one semester at a time. UArts faculty are paid significantly less than other comparable institutions, and struggle with ever-increasing workloads. UArts faculty want to win pay raises that bring pay for all faculty to levels on par with comparable institutions, job security for part-time faculty, faculty voting seats on the Board of Trustees and input on hiring of deans and other leadership positions.

Full-time and part-time staff are currently in the process of voting for union recognition as a separate bargaining unit of UAP. Staff from all academic and nonacademic departments are forming a union to address a historic lack of pay increases and to create a voice with the university administration amid increasing retention problems. Staff went public with their intention to unionize March 14, 2022, and their votes will be counted by the National Labor Relations Board May 16.

Faculty have been conducting open bargaining for the past year, with union members, as well as UArts students, alumni and parents, attending to observe and show support for the contract negotiations.

The UArts Union filed five Unfair Labor Practice charges against the UArts Administration, resulting in restored wages for full-time faculty, a full set of data for their bargaining team and the recent rescinding of policy changes that UArts made with no faculty input.

UArts Crafts Alumna Ellen Littlefield centered the point of the rally in the UArts Union press release: "Faculty and staff must be treated fairly, and that includes paying a living wage and benefits. It's inexcusable that UArts administration is stalling on negotiations with faculty. It's disgraceful that such a prestigious university is so behind the times in understanding the needs of its professors." (tinyurl.com/hhfz4cy4)

UArts is the latest arts university in the U.S. to join a union movement that has gained momentum over the last two years, including the California College of the Arts, Ohio State University's Wexner Art Center and School of the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC).

Catie Rutledge, AIC's coordinator of philanthropy, explained to The Art Newspaper: "At the end of the day, working in the arts or a nonprofit is still a job. You can't eat prestige." (tinyurl.com/bdew2tf3) ☐

**Rally outside Philadelphia UArts, April 27.** WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

# *Join us in the fight for socialism!*

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. ☐

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Vol. 64, No. 18 • May 5, 2022
Closing date: May 4, 2022

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: $36; institutions: $50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998.
A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

Philadelphia

# Displacing low-income families for profit

**By Joe Piette**
**Philadelphia**

Moving in is so easy, you'll never want to
SAVE THE UC TOWNHOMES!
STOP GENTRIFICATION
STOP THE DEMOLITION
EVICTION + MURDER
SAVE THE UC TOWNHOMES
**UC Townhomes residents deliver notice to developer, April 22.** WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Faced with evictions on July 8, residents of Philadelphia's University City Townhomes and their supporters converged on the offices of Daniel Killinger, president of National Real Estate Development in a surprise visit April 22. The company has expressed interest in purchasing the property the homes exist on from the current owner, Altman Management Company.

The activists handed a letter to Killinger that explained any decision to displace over 68 families, including many children, elderly and disabled residents, would lead to a public campaign charging that his company is "in the business of displacing low-income families for profit."

They requested that before National Real Estate proceeds with purchasing the property, Killinger meet again with residents. After the impromptu meeting ended, participants joined a protest on the sidewalk in front of the Center City office building, alongside a banner that read "Save the UC Townhomes!"

Earlier in April, many of the same residents and housing rights activists paid an office visit to Altman Management in West Philadelphia. They demanded Brett Altman offer them the choice of relocating to one of his 20 other West Philadelphia properties.

Penn students disrupted a public event where University of Pennsylvania President Wendell Pritchett was speaking. Protesters won a promise from Pritchett that she would attend a meeting with Townhomes representatives to talk about what UPenn can do to help support low-income residents.

### Gentrification again impacts historic 'Black Bottom' neighborhood

The Save the UC Townhomes Coalition website explains why they organized these protests:

"The UC Townhomes is a 70-unit Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) development built in 1983, located at 3900-90 Market St. in the West Philadelphia neighborhood known as the Black Bottom, an historically Black neighborhood displaced in the late 1960s through the City government use of eminent domain to make way for what is now known as 'University City.' The townhomes, with land bought from the city for $1 after the Rizzo administration found itself in federal court for housing discrimination in locating section 8 sites, were built, and are still owned by IBID Associates, a subsidiary of the Altman Group.

"On July 8, 2021, owner Brett Altman informed the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that it would not renew its federal tax subsidy and would put the property up for sale on July 8, 2022. Local business reporting estimated the sale price at upwards of $100m.

"UC Townhomes tenants were given notice that they would have to move by July 8, 2022." (savetheuctownhomes.com/about/)

### Poverty and redlining — hurdles to finding new homes

Their struggle is part of a larger fight by Black, Brown and low-income Philadelphians to keep their homes in the poorest big city in the U.S., as gentrification increases. (bit.ly/3OKTAT4)

Tens of thousands of units of subsidized housing are vanishing, as developers make huge profits by displacing historically Black communities. The banks, construction and gentrification companies rehab older buildings or tear down and build larger structures of apartments or condos. Disproportionately impacting Black neighborhoods, the new homes are resold or rented at prices out of reach of previous residents.

Starting in the 1930s, banks and insurance companies refused to provide mortgages or insurance to homes in neighborhoods they claimed had "blight, high crime and neglect." The policy came to be known as "redlining" with African Americans and immigrants populating these bank-designated "red zones."

Redlining was supposedly outlawed in 1968, but its legacy remains. In 2019 47% of Black families in Philadelphia were homeowners compared to 59% of white families.

One reason is revealed in a Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (FRBP) study that found Black applicants are about three times more likely to have higher mortgage denials than white applicants. In 2020 Black applicants were 2.7 times more likely to be denied by lenders. (bit.ly/3vSy46e)

### Devaluation of Black-owned property

When Black families do manage to own the property where they live, the racist housing industry undervalues their homes. According to Theresa Singleton of the FRBP, nationally, "owner-occupied homes in Black neighborhoods are undervalued by as much as $48,000 per unit, and that reflects about $156 billion in lost wealth for those homeowners."

Kia Ghee, executive director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and Fair Housing Commission asserts, "Home appraisers are going out to a home that's substantially the same — maybe sometimes even the same home with different owners," she said. "When it was owned by a white family, it was valued at 'X' amount and then devalued significantly when a Black family was in possession of that home." (bit.ly/3s3wrS9)

The inability of Black families to buy and keep homes results in a society where white families have much higher net worth than Latinx, Black or multiple race families. Federal Reserve Board studies show that the median net worth of white families was $188,200 in 2019, while the median net worth of Latinx and Black families was just $36,100 and $24,100, respectively." (bit.ly/370JEUv)

*UC Townhomes residents cannot afford to buy new homes and are fighting any evictions. But if they are displaced, they demand just compensation: $500,000 per family, amounting to 35% of the total sale price. That figure reflects the current prices for the most modest housing in University City.*

About 25% of Philadelphia's population lives in poverty. Some are unemployed; many are working but underpaid. With Pennsylvania's minimum wage at $7.25, low-wage workers cannot save enough from their paycheck-to-paycheck jobs to afford a down payment or pay closing costs on buying a home.

UC Townhomes residents cannot afford to buy new homes and are fighting any evictions. But if they are displaced, they demand just compensation: $500,000 per family, amounting to 35% of the total sale price. That figure reflects the current prices for the most modest housing in University City.

The website explains why their demand is just: "Given the history of the land being twice stolen, once from Indigenous peoples during colonialism, and once from the Black homeowners of the Black Bottom in 1968 through eminent domain, we demand financial compensation for all residents being forced from their homes. Brett Altman's family, having received the land for $1 and benefiting from 40 years of state and federal financial assistance in the form of tax credits and housing subsidies, now stands to sell the same land for up to $100 million." ❑

# Justice for Vivien Barrett

**By Audrey Boytim**

April 23 was a pleasant spring afternoon on the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) campus. Parents of prospective students roamed the "quad" on tours; families with small children enjoyed themselves at games and rides, and several vendors engaged with the crowds. The goal? To celebrate the UMBC community and encourage prospective students to transfer now.

The last thing that the administration wanted people to hear about was the death of UMBC library tech Vivien Barrett, a victim of workplace transphobia. Awareness of this tragedy is exactly what the "Justice For Vivien" campaign sought to instill.

The campaign's flyer, handed out to hundreds of parents and students on campus, reads: "UMBC Library Tech Vivien Barrett died by suicide in 2016 after abuse from her supervisor Paula Langley. [Langley] repeatedly harassed her using slurs, constant misgendering and body shaming. Despite multiple library employees filing complaints with UMBC, nothing has been done. ..." Barrett posted a suicide note on Facebook, in which she claimed Langley had prevented her from receiving promotion due to her status as a transgender woman and that higher ups had declared this not to be discrimination!

The flyer called for a demonstration on April 28 to demand that Langley be fired.

Campaign organizer P.S. (who asked to be identified by her initials) stated "[Our long-term goal is to] restructure Title IX of the civil rights infrastructure to be far stronger and more democratic, with special protection clauses for trans women that show fair, informed awareness of our oppression, spread public awareness of transmisogyny, as well as of UMBC's broader fostering of abuse."

Justice For Vivien dedicated several hours to make this information available to all members of the campus community. Awareness seemed to spread like wildfire. When the campaign began at noon, very few people claimed to have heard about Barrett, but by 3:00 p.m. dozens of students, upon receiving flyers, responded "Oh yeah, I've heard about that. It's terrible."

**Vivien Barrett**

By April 28, the winds had begun to change. An article was published in the UMBC school newspaper, "The Retriever," about the campaign. This Workers World correspondent was informed that an ex-employee was permanently banned from UMBC's campus for interviewing with school reporters. P.S. informed me that she was approached by multiple staff members attempting to stop the demonstration.

The turnout for the April 28 demonstration outside the library was small. Yet the impassioned members of the community who did arrive were unwilling to let opposition, harassment and attempts at silencing their voices stop them from standing up for the rights of the LGBTQ2S+ workers on campus and beyond. As of this writing, administrative bodies are deliberating and planning to decide on Paula Langley's continued employment.

It is important that all workers are aware of the special mistreatment faced by gender-oppressed members of the working class. Trans workers are at higher risk for houselessness, harassment, workplace violence, unemployment and sexual assault. The superexploitation of transgender workers to the point of death is an issue that affects all workers.

Let no one forget that this power over life and death is wielded over our whole class in a capitalist system. We all must continue to demand justice when abuses do occur, working with all our trans comrades to build a world where going to one's job is not a life-or-death risk. This campaign will be an important step in that long journey. ❑

# Death sentences delivered before trials

**By Betsey Piette**
**Philadelphia**

At least 18 people died in 2021 while in custody at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Northeast Philadelphia — a higher death toll than at New York City's infamous Rikers Island jail, which imprisons three times more people. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, a total of 29 people have died in Philadelphia jails which incarcerate around 4,300 people. Three of the 2021 deaths were reportedly by suicide, five by homicide and 10 from drug overdose.

Around 90% of the people incarcerated in this jail are awaiting trial and are not convicted of anything. Yet effectively, those who died were given death sentences. Officials, including Mayor Jim Kenney, have refused to seriously address mounting complaints of unsanitary conditions, lack of toilet paper, infestations, limited access to showers and phone calls and serious delays in medical care.

Prisoners have been denied access to legal counsel and are not even able to attend court dates. Starting during the pandemic, there have been prolonged lockdowns, during which the people incarcerated were denied more than an hour or two out-of-cell time. Some people were not let out of their cells for days at a time, a violation of constitutional protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

The entire system is the equivalent of solitary confinement.

Many incarcerated people have complained of going days without food and sleeping on the floor for lack of beds. One man, who was due to be released, died when the sprinkler in his cell malfunctioned and flooded the cell with water. Despite the entire cell block banging on the bars and shouting for correction officers to step in, no one came for two hours. (Philly.com, April 19)

Prisoners' family members and abolitionist activists have held several protests against these conditions since early 2020. On Feb. 12 they organized a caravan of 50 cars, decorated with placards and yellow ribbons. Horns honking, the vehicles circled the prison several times before driving through city neighborhoods for over two hours, ending at City Hall.

There have been years of civil rights litigation over violations at the jail, with repeated yet unkept promises by Philadelphia officials to address the horrific conditions. Since January 2021 the city has paid over $835,000 for lawsuits over staff assaults, wrongful deaths and medical negligence. In January, for the second time in seven months, the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project succeeded in forcing Philadelphia to pay $125,000 to community bail advocates, because of the inhumane and dangerous conditions.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Demonstrator prepares car to participate in Feb. 12 caravan protesting deadly conditions in Philadelphia jails.**

On April 12 in a settlement agreement in the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania, the city pledged to pay hiring and retention bonuses for correctional officers. Currently only 64% of these jobs are filled, with 644 vacant positions. The agreement also calls for increases of time out of cell to at least four hours a day by May 15. But hiring more guards will not make the jail safer.

As part of the settlement, the city hired John Wetzel, a former Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary, as a consultant. Given the inhumane conditions in the state's prison under Wetzel's tenure, including the lack of adequate health care and food and high rates of COVID-19 deaths, many prison abolitionists question this appointment.

Wetzel's appointment is particularly troubling given that the Philadelphia Department of Prisons made no admission of any civil rights violations in the April 12 agreement.

No one should have to be subjected to such barbaric conditions. Jails continue to harm people and fail to make our communities safer — strong reasons why jails and prisons should be abolished. ❐

# Tears of joy as Lucio execution stopped

**By Gloria Rubac**
**Houston**

Texas' highest court stayed the April 27 execution of Melissa Lucio, the only Mexicana on death row here. There was a collective sigh of relief, many tears of joy and a burden lifted from the shoulders of Lucio, her family, her attorneys and the throngs of her supporters, not only in Texas but around the world.

Lucio was convicted of murdering her two-year-old daughter, Mariah, in 2007. After an abrasive and hostile interrogation by a Texas Ranger, right after she found out her daughter had died, Lucio, pregnant with twins, was tried for capital murder and sent to death row.

Lucio was a victim of sexual and psychological abuse beginning at age six and continuing as a child bride by her first husband and later by her second partner.

*Lucio was convicted of murdering her two-year-old daughter, Mariah, in 2007. After an abrasive and hostile interrogation by a Texas Ranger, right after she found out her daughter had died, Lucio, pregnant with twins, was tried for capital murder and sent to death row.*

On April 25, with two days before she was scheduled to be lynched in the death house in Huntsville, Texas, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals issued a stay and ordered Lucio's trial court to review four of the nine issues raised in a writ of habeas corpus.

First, if the State hadn't used false testimony, the jury likely would not have convicted; second, previously unavailable scientific evidence would preclude her conviction; third, she is actually innocent; and fourth, the State suppressed favorable material evidence in violation of the Supreme Court ruling in Brady v. Maryland.

Lucio's oldest son, John and his spouse Michelle campaigned daily for months for this stay. They were joined by many of Lucio's siblings and children both in the Rio Grande Valley on the Texas-Mexico border and around the state.

What could happen to Lucio now? The best legal case scenario is the trial court judge could make a recommendation to the CCA for a new trial and the CCA would adopt that recommendation. It could be months or years before the trial court determines if the new evidence presented by Lucio's attorneys should warrant a new trial, however.

"I don't think there's any way to predict" whether Lucio gets a new trial based on these four claims, said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, a nonprofit that takes no position on the death penalty but is critical of the way it is administered.

But "the stay of execution and the remand for consideration of these claims is extraordinarily significant," Dunham added, describing the ruling this week as "an open door, a threshold that had to be crossed for Melissa Lucio to have her day in court." (cnn.com, May 1)

### Mass pressure forces stay

Never, ever, have two-thirds of the Texas Senate and over half of the Texas House of Representatives been in support of a stay of execution for any of the 574 people executed in Texas since executions resumed in 1982. The Senate is especially notorious for being a conservative "good 'ol boys" club, known for being pro-life for unborn fetuses but not for living people.

Tivon Schardl, Capital Habeas Unit chief of the Federal Defender for the Western District of Texas and one of Lucio's attorneys, stated, "We know that Melissa's children — Mariah's brothers and sisters — and Mariah's grandparents, aunts and uncles are all relieved and grateful that Melissa's life will not be taken by the State of Texas. And we believe the court honored Mariah's memory, because Melissa is innocent. Melissa is entitled to a new, fair trial.

"We are profoundly grateful to the hundreds of thousands of Texans and people around the U.S. and the world who advocated for Melissa, including Representatives Jeff Leach and Joe Moody, Sen. Eddie Lucio and more than 100 Texas legislators; 225 anti-domestic violence/sexual assault organizations, including the Texas Council on Family Violence, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Friendship of Women and the Lone Star Justice Alliance; over 130 faith leaders, including Pastor Jesse Rincones of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas; and more than 30 groups that work on behalf of Latinos, including the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators."

Professor Sandra Babcock, director of the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide and another one of Lucio's attorneys, stated, "Melissa's life matters. The court's decision paves the way for Melissa to present evidence of her innocence that should have been heard by the jury that condemned her to death 14 years ago. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and intimate partner violence, and now locked away for these past 15 years, Melissa's voice and experiences have never been valued.

"The court's decision signals its willingness to finally hear Melissa's side of the story. If the district court hears all the evidence of Melissa's innocence and the gender bias that infected the police investigation and prosecution, we are confident she will return home to her family."

Lucio stated, "I thank God for my life... I am grateful the court has given me the chance to live and prove my innocence. Mariah is in my heart today and always. I am grateful to have more days to be a mother to my children and a grandmother to my grandchildren." (Innocenceproject.org, April 25)

In a startling and unexpected development this week, Texas State Representative Jeff Leach, a Republican who helped lead the fight to stop Lucio's execution, said that he would support a moratorium on executions in Texas and that other conservatives in the legislature are with him.

Activists finally are seeing a bit of light at the end of this racist tunnel called capital punishment. One activist told Workers World, "We now have an opportunity to actually get some relief from the legislature and should begin planning now for the opening session in January of 2023. Our activism must push like never before, both in the legislature and in the court of public opinion." ❐

## Important lessons 30 years later

# A Marxist Defense of the L.A. Rebellion

*The following excerpts derive from a pamphlet written by Sam Marcy, the late Chairperson of Workers World Party.*

*The 1992 rebellion in Los Angeles was touched off by the racist verdict in the Rodney King beating case, but it elicited sympathy and participation from other oppressed communities. Sixty-three people, the majority Black and Latinx, died.*

*The entire pamphlet may be downloaded at workers.org/books/.*

### Marxism and insurrection

May 5, 1992

The brutal suppression of the Los Angeles insurrection offers a classic example of the relationship of bourgeois democracy to the capitalist state. All this has to be seen in light of the repressive forces amassed by the city, state and federal government: 8,000 police, 9,800 National Guard troops, 1,400 Marines, 1,800 Army soldiers and 1,000 federal marshals. (Associated Press, May 5)

Bourgeois sociology must leave out of consideration the fact that society is divided into exploiter and exploited, oppressors of nationalities and oppressed. The basis for both the exploitation and oppression is the ownership of the means of production by an ever-diminishing group of the population that controls the vital arteries of contemporary society. They are the bourgeoisie, the ruling class.

At the other end of the axis is the proletariat of all nationalities, the producer of all the fabulous wealth. Material wealth has been vastly increasing along with the masses' productivity of labor. But only 1% of the population amasses the lion's share of what the workers produce, while a greater and greater mass is impoverished.

### Flattering 'the people'

No amount of praise, no amount of flattery, can substitute for a clear-cut delineation of the class divisions that perpetually rend society apart.

To the bourgeois social scientists, the masses are the object of history. Marxist theory, on the other hand, demonstrates that the masses are the subject of history. Where they are the objects of history, they are manipulated as raw material to suit the aims of ruling-class exploitation. They become the subject of history only when they rise to the surface in mass revolutionary action.

Their rising, as in Los Angeles, is what Karl Marx called the locomotive of history. Their revolutionary struggle accelerates history, bringing to the fore the real character of the mass movement.

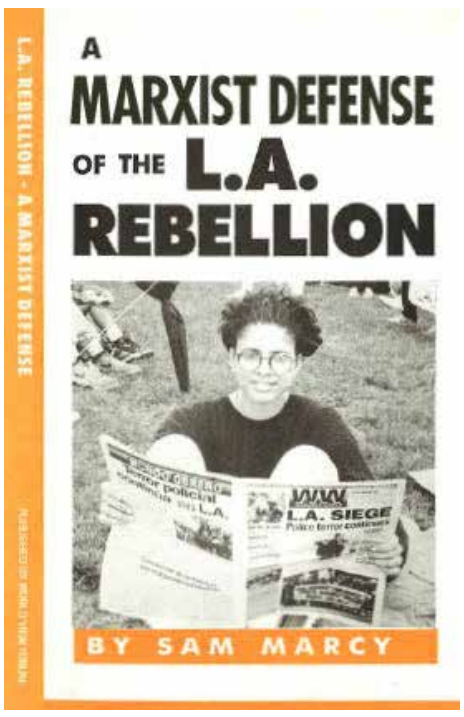
One cannot apply Marxism to any meaningful extent without first recognizing the existence of national oppression — the oppression of a whole people by capitalist imperialism. This is one of the most characteristic features of the present world reality.

This concept above all others must be kept foremost, if we hope to understand what has happened in Los Angeles and in other major cities of this country.

### What is the state? What is democracy?

The insurrection and the way it is being suppressed closely follow the exposition by Frederick Engels in his book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" and later brought up to date by Lenin in "State and Revolution."

Bourgeois sociologists and scholars, and above all capitalist politicians, always confound the relationship between the two. They often treat them as a single phenomenon. In reality, the relation between democracy and the state is based on an inner struggle — between form and essence.




The state can take on many different forms. A state can have the form of a bourgeois democracy; it can be a monarchy; it may be ruled by a military junta. And in modern society, on the very edge of the 21st century, it may have a totalitarian or fascist form.

Whatever its form, its essence is determined by which class is dominant economically and consequently also dominant politically. In contemporary society, this means the rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie over the proletariat and the oppressed nationalities.

The bourgeoisie cannot maintain its class rule by relying solely on one particular form of the state. Under such circumstances, should there be an imperialist war or a deep capitalist crisis that leads to ferment among the masses, the bourgeois state would be vulnerable to revolutionary overthrow.

But the state is not just the officialdom — who presume to govern in the interest of all the people. The state in its essential characteristics is the organization, to quote Engels, of a "special public force" that consists not merely of armed men and women but of material appendages, prisons and repressive institutions of all kinds.

Most noteworthy are the prisons calculated to break the spirit of millions of the most oppressed, while pretending to have some mock forms of rehabilitation. All the most modern means — mental and physical — are used to demoralize and deprave the character of those incarcerated. These repressive institutions, this public force, appear so omnipotent against the unarmed mass of the oppressed and exploited. But it stands out as the very epitome of gentility and humaneness when it comes to incarcerating favored individuals, especially the very rich, who have transgressed the norms of capitalist law.

In general then, the Los Angeles insurrection shows that democracy is a veil that hides the repressive character of the capitalist state. The state at all times is the state of the dominant class. And the objective of the special bodies of armed men and women is to secure, safeguard and uphold the domination of the bourgeoisie.

Engels explained that in the course of development of capitalist society, as the class antagonisms grow sharper, the state — that is, the public force — grows stronger.

The sharpening of class and national antagonisms had even then resulted in larger and larger appropriations for civilian and military personnel employed for the sole purpose of suppressing the civil population at home and waging adventurist imperialist wars abroad. The state grows in proportion as class and national antagonisms develop. Democracy is merely a form which hides the predatory class character of the bourgeois state. Nothing so much proves this as the steady and consistent growth of militarism and the police forces in times of peace as well as war.

The ruling class continually cultivates racism to keep the working class divided in order to maintain its domination. This is as true at home as it is abroad. The forces of racism and national oppression have been deliberately stimulated by Pentagon and State Department policies all across the globe.

### Marxism on violence

After every stage in the struggle of the workers and oppressed people, there follows an ideological struggle over what methods the masses should embrace to achieve their liberation from imperialist monopoly capital. There are always those who abjure violence while minimizing the initial use of violence by the ruling class. They denounce it in words, while in deeds they really cover it up.

Yes indeed, they readily admit the verdict in the Rodney King beating was erroneous and unfair. But — and here their voices grow louder — "The masses should not have taken to the streets and taken matters into their own hands." Their denunciation of the violence of the ruling class is subdued and muffled — above all it is hypocritical, a sheer formality. It's an indecent way of seeming to take both sides of the argument, when what follows is in reality a condemnation of the masses.

In times when the bourgeoisie is up against the wall, when the masses have risen suddenly and unexpectedly, the bourgeoisie gets most lyrical in abjuring violence. It conjures up all sorts of lies and deceits about the unruliness of a few among the masses as against the orderly law-abiding many.

The Marxist view of violence flows from an altogether different concept. It first of all distinguishes between the violence of the oppressors as against the responsive violence of the masses. Just to be able to formulate it that way is a giant step forward, away from disgusting bourgeois praise for nonviolence. It never occurs to any of them to show that the masses have never made any real leap forward with the theory of nonviolence. Timidity never made it in history.

Indeed, Marxists do prefer nonviolent methods if the objectives the masses seek — freedom from oppression and exploitation — can be obtained that way. But Marxism explains the historical evolution of the class struggle, as well as the struggle of oppressed nations as against oppressors.

As Marx put it, "force is the midwife to every great revolution."

None of the great revolutions has ever occurred without being accompanied by force and violence. And it is always the oppressor — the ruling class and the oppressing nationality — that is most congenitally prone to use force as soon as the masses raise their heads. Does not the bourgeoisie, once it has tamed the proletariat at home, use force and violence through its vast military armada to more efficiently exploit and suppress the many underdeveloped nations throughout the world?

While it might seem that in Los Angeles national oppression alone is involved, in reality it derives from the class exploitation of the African American masses dating back to the days of enslavement.

### Fewer workers, more cops

How interesting that technology everywhere displaces labor, reducing the number of personnel.

The truth is that the development of higher and more sophisticated technology under capitalism doesn't contribute to the welfare of the masses but, on the contrary, throws them into greater misery.

What has been the general trend? The growth of technology, particularly sophisticated high technology, has reduced the number of workers employed in industry as well as in the services. The introduction of laborsaving devices and methods has dramatically reduced the number of workers in all fields.

But the opposite trend prevails in the police forces. This is an absolutely incontestable fact.

At one time the police patrolled the streets on foot. Maybe they used a public telephone for communications with headquarters. Today they are equipped with sophisticated gear. They ride either on motorcycles or in police cars or helicopters. They communicate by radio.

All this should reduce the number of police. But the trend is quite the contrary: to increase the forces of repression. This is not geared to productivity as in industry. Their growth is geared to the growth of national antagonisms, the growth of racism and the bourgeoisie's general anti-labor offensive.

In Los Angeles, the bourgeoisie is forced to bring in federal troops to assist city and state authorities. The social composition of the Army is not just a cross section of capitalist society. The Army and Marines, especially the infantry, have a preponderance of Black and Latinx soldiers.

In Los Angeles the local police and state forces were inadequate. Only because the masses were unarmed was the bourgeoisie able to suppress what was in truth an insurrection — a revolutionary uprising.

### Spontaneity and consciousness

As Marx would put it, such a rising is a festival of the masses. The incidental harm is far outweighed by the fact that it raises the level of the struggle to a higher plateau. The wounds inflicted by the gendarmerie will be healed. The lessons will be learned: that a spontaneous uprising has to be supported with whatever means are available; that a great divide exists between the leaders and the masses.

No viable class or nation in modern capitalist society can hope to take destiny in its own hands by spontaneous struggles alone. Spontaneity as an element of social struggle must beget its own opposite: leadership and organization. Consciousness of this will inevitably grow. ❐

# On May Day: Power in our hands

*Continued from page 1*

Village. The hospital was torn down to build elite housing for the superrich. At this final stop, Sanchez and McGlawn used bats to break a piñata representing Schultz's face — to the cheers of everyone.

On May 2, migrant workers from the Laundry Workers Center along with supporters organized a 6:30 a.m. action at a Brooklyn construction site to demand safe working conditions. They formed a human chain surrounding the car of a construction manager who refused to accept a letter of demands from the workers.

### Workers uniting in the East

The National Labor Relations Board reported that union election petitions were up 57% in the first half of the 2022 fiscal year compared with the year before — with Starbucks Workers United organizing which began at the **Buffalo, New York**, Elmwood store, driving a lot of the action. Starbucks union election petitions account for nearly a quarter of all petitions filed since this January! To celebrate on May 1, activists and organizers braved the rain and wind at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Attendees were treated to a cookout, and many received free training in Narcan (Naloxone) treatment, courtesy of the WNY Mobile Overdose Prevention Services.

**Buffalo, New York** WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

**Durham, North Carolina** PHOTO: SOUTHERN WORKERS ASSEMBLY

Workers at amazon & everywhere have a right to a union!
FIGHT RACISM AND UNION BUSTING!
Philly Workers Solidarity Network
ART IS FOR THE PEOPLE
FROM PALESTINE TO THE PHILIPPINES
STOP THE U.S. WAR MACHINE
ANAKBAYAN PHILLY

**Philadelphia** WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Philadelphia**'s May Day rally, organized by the Workers Solidarity Network began outside the African American History Museum, across the street from a federal prison where incarcerated workers are held. Brice Patterson from Workers World Party opened by speaking of struggles faced by the working class and the need for a united fightback. Sterling Johnson and Darlene Foreman with Save UC Townhomes Coalition described their battle against gentrification. Blaise Laramee from the Tenants Union and Cindy Miller with Squirrel Hill Neighbors outlined the campaign for affordable housing in the city.

The fight to free political prisoners, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, was motivated by Gabe Bryant from Mobilization4Mumia and Mike Africa with Love Not Phear. Jasmine Peake described the campaign to free local activist Ant Smith. The need to resist global imperialism was brought home by Palestinian activist Susan Abulhawa, Filipino activists from Anakbayan Philadelphia and Chris Velazquez from Veterans for Peace.

Then people marched behind a banner supporting the right to unionize by workers everywhere. Many held up large three-dimensional fists with words and symbols of struggle, created with support from Spiral Q. Joining a rally for undocumented and migrant workers' rights, organized by the Movement of Immigrant Leaders Pennsylvania, Juntos and El Paro Philly, people then marched to Ninth and Washington streets, after being led through the city by an energizing Indigenous Mexican dance troupe, Kalpulli Kamaxtle Xiuhcóatl.

### Multinational Midwest

A youthful, multinational crowd turned out for **Cleveland**'s May Day Workers Assembly and march. Speakers began the day at a plaza near the University Circle Starbucks, the fourth Cleveland-area store to file for a union election. Voting has already begun at the downtown store, the first to file.

Other local activists spoke at points along the march route. The working-class movement was well represented: Starbucks Workers United from the University Circle store, Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 1 that represents janitors at downtown office buildings, newly unionized teachers at Menlo Park charter school and employees of Preterm abortion clinic. Other groups included Cleveland Sex Workers Alliance, Black Lives Matter Cleveland, Housing Justice Coalition, Greater Cleveland Immigrant Support Network, Guardians for Fair Work, InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia and more.

### Organize the South!

May Day Worker Power March in **Durham, North Carolina**, was endorsed by more than 20 local groups and advanced under the slogans "Power to the workers! Power to the tenants! Power to our community!" Marchers were joined by over 80 workers who were in town to attend the Southern Workers Assembly organizing school. These included Amazon workers from New Orleans, Atlanta, Kentucky and across North Carolina.

An organizers' statement described the day as "a massive worker-led action to take back our community and demand: Stop the exploitation! Stop the union busting! Stop the gentrification!

"We have always been essential workers, but the global pandemic highlighted our critical role in society, yet we still don't get the respect we deserve with dignified wages and safety. We demand collective bargaining rights for all workers!"

Community and state endorsers included Durham Workers Assembly, NC Raise Up/Fight for $15, Southern Workers Assembly, Fed Up in the South, Black Workers for Justice, N.C. AFL-CIO, Durham Association of Educators, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) Local 150, NC Public Service Workers Union, National Domestic Workers Alliance, Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment (CAUSE), N.C. Poor People's Campaign, Workers World Party-Durham and the N.C. Green Party.

**Cleveland** WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

### West Coast solidarity

May Day in **the Bay Area** focused on local labor struggles and beyond, to raise up the efforts of Amazon, Starbucks and REI workers fighting for union recognition.

During a **San Francisco** march that retraced the footsteps of the 1934 general strike, sparked by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Trent Willis, past president of ILWU Local 10, said it was time to do more than "reenact" the general strike.

He spoke of the growing unity between teachers in the Oakland Education Association and the Longshore and Warehouse workers at the ports, joined in opposition to privatization and greed. He stated the time might be right to call for another general strike. Willis held up the example of the **Oakland, California**, one-day solidarity strike between teachers and longshore workers April 29.

Joe Thompson, a Starbucks worker from **Santa Cruz, California**, where organizing has been going on since January, called out Starbucks for union busting. He emphasized: "We will continue winning at Starbucks; we will continue winning at Amazon; we will continue winning at Chevron, until all workers who want to be unionized are unionized."

B.K. White, a striking Chevron worker and member of Steelworkers Local 5, expressed solidarity with the Starbucks workers, teachers in Oakland and the ILWU. Workers at the Chevron refinery in **Richmond, California**, have been on strike since March 21 for a better contract.

An appeal to the labor movement to redouble efforts to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners was given by Angela Davis — longtime activist, scholar and honorary member of ILWU Local 10.

In an action called by the **Portland, Oregon**, May Day Coalition, hundreds filled downtown with support for migrants and workers of the world. With proud banners and chants that echoed through the streets, people declared that they are sick of capitalist exploitation. Marchers went to Bancorp Tower to link up with Starbucks, Amazon and postal workers and then on to the Justice Center to support migrant and anti-imperialist struggles.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

**Joe Thompson from Starbucks Workers United, San Francisco.**

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

**Maddi Johnson (right) of Workers World Party, Portland, Oregon.**

At the final stop at Portland State University, Maddi Johnson of Workers World Party gave a fiery speech on the need for radical organization: "Workers have all this power in our hands; we just have to use it. A first step is organizing and strengthening unions and forming Workers Assemblies — councils that unite workers across workplaces. Our strength is in our numbers, and every time we join together, that strength multiplies.

"The workers who march internationally on May Day know where we stand. We know what suffering the capitalist system guarantees — and we know what we must do to move beyond."

*Contributing to this article were Olujimi Alade, Sara Flounders, Judy Greenspan, Martha Grevatt, Maddi Johnson, Ryan Lockwood, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Susan Schnur and Workers World Durham bureau.*

# City Feed workers united

**By Mairead Skehan Gillis**

City Feed Unite experienced energizing labor and community solidarity at their first union rally in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, April 24. The rally took place down the street from City Feed and Supply, a local high-end grocery store and cafe with two locations and approximately 40 employees. The store sells "fair trade" products and union-made merchandise but has not yet welcomed a union of their own workers.

CFU has joined the wave of baristas filing for unions in the past year. From Starbucks to Pavement to Darwin's Coffee, workers are demanding a seat at the bargaining table. CFU has organized under the Industrial Workers of the World Boston. The rally was called in response to the owners' refusal to voluntarily recognize the union two weeks prior, despite the outpouring of support and excitement from customers, local residents, and union organizers across the city.

According to CFU organizer Emery Spooner who opened the rally, the demands of the union include "health care for each and every worker, so we can afford to go to the doctor, guaranteed paid sick time if we are infected with COVID-19, a workplace that is consistent and transparent [around wages] and basic dignity and respect on the job."

CFU announced the formation of their own union, while gaining immense inspiration from the thousands of Amazon and Starbucks workers organizing against inadequate benefits and treatment by their billionaire bosses. They assert that small-business employees should be guaranteed the right to "agency and self determination over working conditions and our own well-being."

WW PHOTO: MAIREAD SKEHAN GILLIS

**First union rally for City Feed Unite in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, April 24.**

Boston being a union town, representatives from the Boston Teachers Union; the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; unionized coffee shops; and leftist groups Workers World Party, Socialist Alternative and DSA came to demonstrate that they have CFU's back!

Jamaica Plain resident and revolutionary musician Evan Greer opened their performance at the rally with a lively rendition of "Which Side Are You On?" which stated that "no business should be afraid of a union unless they're exploiting their workers. At Amazon and Starbucks, Pavement and City Feed, every worker needs a union to fight the bosses' greed."

The workers are preparing for their upcoming NLRB election to ensure that as many employees as possible who want to cast a vote are able to attend. More information on their organizing efforts, including the CFU Petition of Community Support, can be found at linktr.ee/cityfeedunite. ☐

# Worker and community power shut down Oakland

**By Judy Greenspan**
**Oakland, California**

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

**United protest of teachers, community and longshore workers marches through downtown Oakland, April 29.**

Despite threats of retaliation from officials in the Oakland Unified School District and the Port of Oakland, teachers and longshore workers went out on strike on April 29. They shut down public schools and the port for the entire day to protest school closures and the pending sale of Howard Terminal to the Oakland Athletics baseball team. Solidarity built the day's actions and made them happen.

The state Public Employment Relations Board denied a last-minute request for an injunction sought by OUSD. So at 6:30 a.m. April 29, picket lines were set up at every Oakland public school. This reporter joined the picketers at United for Success Academy, where not one student came to school or crossed the line.

Teachers at other schools reported similar experiences. Sibling unions representing custodians and office staff told their members that they would not face retaliation for engaging in a sympathy strike.

After taking a membership vote, the Oakland Education Association called the one-day strike to support its Unfair Labor Practices claim against OUSD for ordering the closure of up to 11 schools over the next two years without soliciting community or labor input. Many family members of students and community supporters walked the picket line in the morning at two of the schools slated for closure, La Escuelita Middle School and Parker Elementary School.

### Schools and labor vs. privatization

Tireless organizing by a new coalition, Schools and Labor Against Privatization (SLAP), provided the momentum for the one-day strike and the other actions on that day, organized by International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, the OEA, Service Employees Union Local 1021, Oakland students, parents and community organizations.

After the morning picket, OEA called for a family friendly "block party" at the Lake Merritt Amphitheater. There, people made signs, listened to music, ate lunch and prepared for the rest of the day. At 1 p.m., SLAP members and OEA teachers led the group to Oscar Grant Plaza for a community rally, which was joined by ILWU members after their May Day union meeting in San Francisco.

Hundreds of people filled the plaza in front of City Hall. As marchers entered the plaza, they were greeted by chants by Demi, an Oakland elementary school student and daughter of Misty Cross, an activist with Mothers for Housing.

Speakers included Moses Omolade, an education worker from Westlake Middle School, who went on a hunger strike when the school closures were first announced. Parents of students impacted by the closures and cuts in services addressed the rally. These included Max Orozco, whose child attends La Escuelita, and Kristina Molina, a mother of children with special needs. Isaac Murillo, an eighth grade student from La Escuelita also spoke.

### 'Public resources for people, not billionaires'

Trent Willis, past president of ILWU Local 10, spoke on behalf of his local and Longshore and Warehouse workers in Locals 6 and 34. He told of the united fight of the teachers and the longshore workers against the gentrifiers like John Fisher, the owner of the Oakland Athletics, and the charter school companies. Willis told the crowd that we are here to fight for the public resources. He stressed: "Public resources are meant for the public, not for the billionaires!"

OEA President Keith Brown stated: "When we fight, we win!" He talked about the struggle of the teachers and the Oakland community against the racist closure of schools in Oakland's Black and Brown communities.

The crowd then marched down Broadway to the empty offices of the OUSD. Since the beginning of the pandemic, its staff has been working virtually. The school district's building has been empty for two years, while the monthly rental fee is $250,000. Yet the school district claims it has no money!

A unified march of longshore workers including the ILWU Local 10 Drill Team, OEA teachers and residents of Oakland occupied the street in front of the school district's building and continued their rally. A local community artist facilitated the painting of a mural, on which was written: "Save the schools! Save the port!"

Then, at 4 p.m., hundreds of teachers, parents, and community supporters headed to the Middle Harbor, Shoreline Park in the Port of Oakland to shut down the second shift of longshore workers. This was a strong act of solidarity after a long day of picketing and marching. ILWU contracts contain language supporting their members against crossing picket lines.

### 'Oakland is not for sale!'

Members of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center and the Palestinian Youth Movement and Filipino activists from Gabriela stepped forward to lead picket lines at five gates at the port. Striking teachers led chants and kept the lines going. The purpose of this final act was to send a strong message to the forces of gentrification and privatization that "Oakland is not for sale!" At 7:45 p.m., the port arbitrators officially shut down the second shift.

This unified one-day strike was a first for the Oakland community and it was certainly not the last. The community will continue to fight against both the school closures and the gentrification of the Port of Oakland.

*The writer is a proud member of the Oakland Education Association and a union representative for the Oakland substitute teachers.*

# Painters union charges wage theft on KSU campus

**By Dianne Mathiowetz**
**Kennesaw, Georgia**

Kennesaw State University students, faculty and staff; AFL-CIO representatives; elected officials; a delegation from the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights; and others answered the call of IUPAT District Council 77 (International Union of Painters and Allied Trades) to denounce the illegal and racist practices of AEI Painting company, April 28.

University officials went ahead and contracted this business to do the painting of a new housing building on campus, despite being provided abundant proof of its mistreatment of its workers.

AEI misclassified immigrant workers, in particular, as contract employees or 1099 independent contractors. As such they receive no overtime pay, even if they are working 60 plus hours a week. They are not eligible for worker's compensation if hurt on the job or for unemployment. If they complain, they are intimidated by threats of calling ICE.

Declaring the rally a success, the Painters' union promised to return again to demand justice for these workers. ☐

WW PHOTO: ARIELLE ROBINSON

# Webinar builds Workers Summit of the Americas

*The Tijuana Workers Summit of the Americas is scheduled for June 10-12. Organizers held a April 29 webinar to promote the Summit, which included the speakers below.*

**Steve Kirschbaum, Vice President, Steelworkers (USW) Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers:**

We are honored to be a part of this timely and historic launch for this Workers Summit, a class answer to the summit of the thieves.

Our union, since we founded it 48 years ago, has always felt that an injury to one is an injury to all. It's a global concept: internationalism.

Our enemy is a common enemy. We were proud to work with many of you around the question of freedom for Alex Saab, the Venezuelan diplomat. In violation of every international law, U.S. imperialists orchestrated his kidnapping and have held him to this day. So we are aware and have fought against these criminal sanctions that really target the people. We stand with our Cuban siblings and the Venezuelans.

U.S. imperialism has many weapons in its arsenal. They will try to assassinate leaders. They will invade countries. They will do regime change. We believe that the answer to all of this is to globalize solidarity. Meetings like what we are planning in Tijuana are an important step toward building solidarity in action, to be able to show it to our enemies, those who wish to eliminate all that is progressive — what we believe the workers' movement has snatched from the grip of imperialism. That's what Cuba is. That's what Venezuela is.

We look forward to doing all that we can to make the summit successful and deepening the organizational roots of solidarity.

**Alison Bodine, The Fire this Time**

Greetings and solidarity from The Fire this Time, a movement for social justice in Canada. It's really an honor to be here this afternoon with our co-fighters from across the Americas, planning for the Workers Summit of the Americas, and with PCOA, the Anti-Imperialist Worker's Platform. The Workers Summit of the Americas is being organized following the "Summit of the Americas," called by U.S. President Joe Biden in Los Angeles June 6-10.

The Summit of the Americas is not in any way an expression of the peoples of the Americas. The voices of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua are being excluded, as well as the voices of poor, working and oppressed people across the Americas, suffering under the boot of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad. Now more than ever, we must work together to build a united front against U.S. imperialism, against U.S. sanctions and blockades, against U.S. military bases and the expansion of NATO into Latin America and the Caribbean, while also building the fight against all forms of U.S. imperialism, including racism, sexism and homophobia at home in the United States or Canada.

The [Canadian] government is complicit in U.S.-led wars and sanctions against people in Latin America, the Caribbean and around the world. For example, the recent elections which took place in Venezuela and Nicaragua, transparent democratic elections that I was honored to be able to observe on the ground, were both denounced as undemocratic by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada has also participated in the assaults on Latin American countries through sanctions on Nicaragua, Venezuela and supported things such as the coup in Bolivia and going all the way back to the coup in Haiti in 2004.

The Fire this Time movement for social justice invites and encourages all people that believe in a better and just world to join in the Workers Summit of the Americas.

**Sara Flounders, International Action Center**

The meeting in Tijuana is an opportunity to have a class response, a worker's response to U.S. imperialism, which is hosting a conference which is intended to increase in every way the level of pressure on all the peoples of the Americas to enforce ever harsher sanctions.

To do this on the eve of May Day shows that we are thinking about the international workers struggle. I want to ask that we think of the most helpful ways in which we can build for the conference in Tijuana, so that we come with demands, with petitions prepared, with statements from our organizations and that we're listening to the meeting that is being organized in Los Angeles. This "Summit of the Americas" is a meeting of gangsters. And they are the same ones who are making war on the working class right here in the United States but have again and again invaded, sanctioned, assassinated workers and leaders throughout the Americas.

The International Action Center is very proud to be part of hosting the conference. ❐

# Biden, Pelosi, Austin declare war on Russia

*Continued from page 1*

world: "We want to see Russia weakened." The April 25 New York Times wrote that this implies "that the United States wanted to erode Russian military power for years to come."

According to the April 28 Times, "Biden signaled a vast increase in America's commitment to defeating Russia in Ukraine on [April 28] as he asked Congress to authorize $33 billion for more artillery, antitank weapons and other hardware."

The U.S. this year "would be authorizing $46.6 billion for the Ukraine war, which represents more than two-thirds of Russia's entire annual defense budget of $65.9 billion" and more than what the U.S. spent each year during its occupation of Afghanistan.

Washington and its NATO allies plan to continue to pour weapons into Ukraine to use Ukrainians to fire at and kill Russian soldiers. Some artillery and rocket shells have already been fired into Russian territory.

***That Republicans in the Senate will continue to find fault with Biden's conduct of the war has nothing in common with real opposition to the war program. Such opposition must arise outside the two war parties.***

**Pelosi in Kiev**

On April 30, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi met with Vlodymyr Zelensky, an actor and comedian whose current role is as Ukraine's president. The next day Pelosi rephrased Austin's statement at a news conference in Poland: "America stands with Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine until victory is won. And we stand with NATO." (NY Times, May 1)

Biden, Pelosi and Austin can anticipate support for U.S. aggression from the Senate Republicans, who vetoed any of Biden's popular promises for COVID-19 aid, reduction of student loans or the "Build Back Better" plan. The Democrats' record is to abandon campaign promises without a fight.

The Democratic Party and the Republican Party leadership support war against Russia. That Republicans in the Senate will continue to find fault with Biden's conduct of the war has nothing in common with real opposition to the war program. Such opposition must arise outside the two war parties.

Another, "unofficial" agency of U.S. intervention in Ukraine is the "International Legion" of foreign fighters integrated into the Ukrainian army. The May 1 NY Times described Malcolm Nance, a 20-year veteran of U.S. Navy intelligence, as the "public face of the legion in Ukraine." After his retirement and 9/11, Nance was active as "an intelligence and security contractor in Iraq, Afghanistan, the UAE and North Africa."

Nance has also written books about counterterrorism, mostly about al-Qaida and the "Islamic State" groups, and about alleged ties between Russian President Vladimir Putin and former U.S. President Donald Trump. It is unclear if Nance's role after he left the Navy has been mercenary — or official, but disguised.

All elements of the U.S. imperialist state — military, intelligence and administrative — are lined up to use Ukraine as a battering ram against Russia and to use the Ukrainians as cannon fodder. And while no NATO or U.S. forces have officially entered the war, the U.S. is sending 8,000 additional U.S. troops to Europe and an unknown number of contractors, that is, mercenaries. Some are in Germany training Ukrainians to use advanced weapons.

**West Europe submits to U.S., resistance begins**

Biden said April 28 that he would demand more military aid for Ukraine from other NATO powers. The first reactions from the European imperialist ruling class and its representatives in the governments of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the smaller Western European states have been to line up behind the U.S. war, sending weapons to Ukraine and increasing their military budgets.

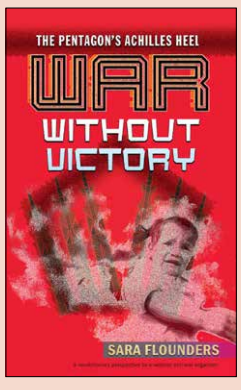
To stay on Washington's side regarding sanctions against Russia, these Western European regimes have to sacrifice the extensive trade relations they have with Russia and look for alternatives to less expensive Russian oil and gas. German industry has been dependent on Russian gas.

Some official voices have been heard in Western Europe differing with the goal of changing the Russian government, that is, deposing Putin; but no ruling-class forces have dared to challenge the U.S. head-on.

Similar to the mass reaction in the U.S., the European antiwar movement was stunned by the outbreak of the war and swamped by the avalanche of anti-Russian propaganda. This movement is now beginning to mobilize against what they see as the dangerous threat of a nuclear war.

Workers in Italy and Greece have interfered with arms shipments to Ukraine. Spanish anti-imperialists have called a demonstration for May 7 in Madrid at the U.S. Embassy. In Vienna, Austria, people held a demonstration demanding the country maintain its neutrality.

A NATO Summit is scheduled for the end of June in Madrid. This will be a gathering of the warmakers and is the obvious place for a massive antiwar action, which anti-imperialist groups have begun to plan and which the Spanish regime has already allocated over $30 million to repress. ❐




**WAR WITHOUT VICTORY**
**by Sara Flounders**

*"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."*

– Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister, Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

Free PDF download available at ***workers.org/books***

# Germany enters war following Washington's Ramstein program

**By Sevim Dagdelen**

*The author is chairperson of the parliamentary group of Die Linke (The Left Party) in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag (lower house) and its spokesperson for international politics and disarmament. Ramstein is the big U.S. Air Force Base in southwestern Germany. These are two articles published in Junge Welt, April 27 and April 29, respectively. Translation: John Catalinotto.*

April 27 — The war in Ukraine is now all about weapons, weapons, weapons. More weapons and heavier weapons. Every taboo of the post-war period is falling. Diplomacy has been written off.

A new German militarism in the wake of U.S. militarism is the benchmark of this German government. While U.N. Secretary General António Guterres is in Moscow promoting a quick ceasefire and an end to the war, NATO members are pushing for the military pact to wage war against Russia.

The Ukrainian soldiers are only a means to an end. Meanwhile, the goal has become taking the war to Russia.

### Ramstein means war

NATO is concerned with victory and nothing else. To this end, Washington has convened a special meeting of weapons representatives at the U.S. airbase in Ramstein in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Instead of supporting Guterres and regarding the U.S. war council on German soil as a calculated political affront to [Germany's] democratic sovereignty, the [Social Democrats] SPD/Green government has sent Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht to participate and has announced that it is going full steam ahead: The government of the SPD, the Greens and the [Free Democrats] FDP is now delivering German tanks to the East, as demanded. Until victory. There must be no negotiated peace.

The Ukrainian ambassador and neo-Nazi activist Andrij Melnyk has finally asserted himself at Chancellor Olaf Scholz's cabinet table. There is no doubt that German weapons end up going to right-wing extremist battalions integrated into the National Guard and Ukrainian army, and no one in the German government shows any concern.

"Cheetah," "Marten," "Puma," "Fox," "Boxer," "Leopard" — what reads like the harmless listing in "Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia" threatens to become the program for expanding the Ukraine conflict into a third world war against the nuclear power Russia. By supplying heavy weapons, Germany and NATO are making themselves a direct party to the war.

### Militarism challenges our resistance

The situation is red-hot. And the U.S. administration is throwing gasoline on the fire, by which the German government then warms itself. Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin announced in Ramstein that Washington will move "heaven and earth" to arm Ukraine for further war. And British Secretary of State for Defense James Heappey tells Kiev that it is legitimate to attack Russia with British weapons and carry out strikes on its territory.

Lambrecht contributes the German tanks that will be used to win the war of attrition. Ramstein is the symbol of a NATO war program. The winners have already been determined: the arms manufacturers. It is carried out on the backs of the populations in Europe. It is no time to be duped by war propaganda. The new militarism challenges our resistance.

### Germany enters war (de facto)

April 29. On April 28, 2022, the Bundestag [German parliament] decided that Germany would de facto enter into war with Russia. With a motion, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Social Democrats (SDP), Free Democrats (FDP) and Greens constituted themselves as a war coalition.

The objections that Chancellor Olaf Scholz had raised only 72 hours earlier in opposition to the delivery of heavy weapons, that they increased the danger of a third world war, were blown away. In the motion of the war coalition, the delivery of heavy weapons to Ukraine is virtually invoked as a cure-all.

In addition to the commitment to the rearmament fund of 100 billion euros, the additional commitment to a further annual increase in the military budget to more than 70 billion euros was fixed. (1 euro = $1.05, April 29)

In speeches, numerous members of this Alliance for the Ukraine War, led by the chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, Friedrich Merz, promoted the goal of a military victory for Ukraine, which they said Germany must support unconditionally.

This break with all the military taboos that grew out of the defeat of German fascism in 1945, and its dangerous consequences, were somewhat alarming to the deputies. In a kind of defensive magic spell, the proposal states right at the beginning that "neither Germany nor NATO will become a party to the war."

But the delivery of ever more and ever heavier weapons and the call for a victorious peace against Russia make these incantations seem extremely questionable. These people remind us of someone who draws a square, but writes in the accompanying text to the drawing that the viewer should see a circle here.

### Surreal and dangerous

In addition to the de facto entry into the war via the delivery of heavy weapons and training of Ukrainian soldiers to use them, they have put in the foreground the unconditional will of a total economic war against Russia. In the process, the battle zone is being increasingly expanded. China is openly threatened with being caught in the West's crosshairs if Beijing tries to undermine Western sanctions against Russia.

**Negotiations for peace, not tanks for war!**

***It is no time to be duped by war propaganda. The new militarism challenges our resistance.***

Language can be treacherous in this regard. In neocolonial fashion, the motion says the German government must "emphatically communicate to the People's Republic of China the expectations of Germany and the European Union."

Respect for the U.N. Charter — all gone. The war coalition is openly threatening. Its language is one of violence and threats. Russia is to be pushed to the wall, even if this means a world economic war even against China.

The problem of this new German militarism remains the recalcitrance of the German population, the majority of which rejects the delivery of heavy weapons and, according to a survey in "The Spiegel," the majority of which has no desire to starve and freeze for war. This attitude must be expanded to fight the war coalition's entry into the war. ❐

# South Bronx in solidarity with Palestine

**By Richie Merino**

*The following remarks were given by International Action Center activist Richie Merino at the Al Quds demonstration in New York City, April 29.*

Revolutionary greetings. I'm a proud Chicano from the South Bronx, and our community stands in strong solidarity with, and looks up to, the Palestinian resistance for inspiration. The Palestinian struggle against the Zionist settler-colonial project known as Israel is inextricably linked with the struggle waged in the South Bronx against gentrification and police violence.

The New York Police Department and Israeli Defense Forces are both tools of white supremacists. The Israeli Defense Forces are a permanent, occupying militarized force in Palestine, in the same way that the NYPD is a permanent, occupying militarized force in Black/Brown/immigrant communities like the South Bronx.

U.S. politicians, especially Democrats, have granted local police departments the power to obtain U.S. military weapons, defense gear and surveillance technology through the Department of Defense's 1033 program, which has transferred billions of dollars in weapons to the NYPD and other police departments since its inception in the 1990s.

Israel is one of the U.S.' largest weapons importers, having purchased tens of billions of dollars in military equipment since 1950.

We know what the racist state of Israel does with U.S.-made weaponry. These weapons are used to surveil revolutionary activists from occupied Palestine to the South Bronx and crush any dissent against Western imperialism. They are used to attack innocent worshippers at Al-Aqsa mosque, including mothers and children; and they target, kill or imprison Palestinians resisting Zionist settler colonialism.

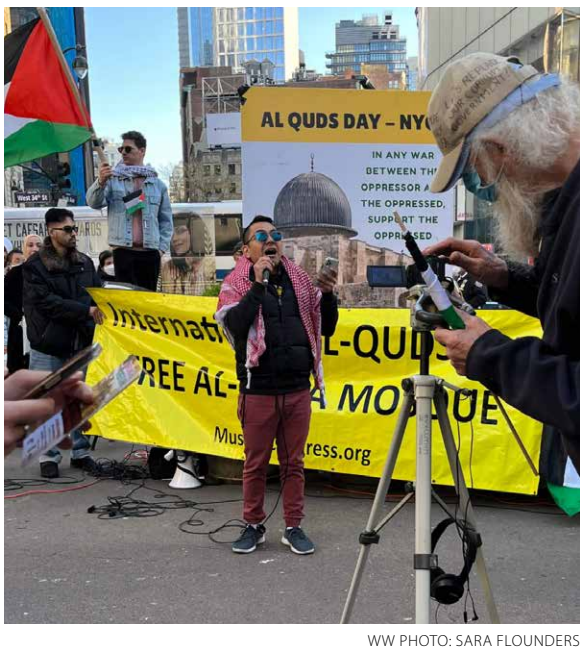
The NYPD trains with and exchanges tactics in violence and oppression with Israel. Who knew that the NYPD has a satellite office in Tel Aviv?

Racial profiling and "crowd control" tactics utilized by the NYPD against people of the South Bronx are learned from IDF suppression tactics in occupied Palestine.

Understanding that both the U.S. and Israel are white-supremacist, settler-colonial projects, whose founding were predicated on genocide and stealing land, explains why both rely on exploitation, violence, subjugation and mass incarceration to keep their project going. Gaza is the world's largest open-air prison.

The European settlers we learned about in our history classes are not a stain of the past — they still exist today, carrying out the same white-supremacist colonial project of the 1800s, when European settlers weaponized religion to commit genocide against Indigenous peoples as they colonized the Americas.

This "Manifest Destiny" still exists today. Imperialists want to displace and colonize Indigenous Palestinians just like they want to displace and colonize my neighbors in the South Bronx. Settler-colonialism is a zero-sum game, and the end goal of the settler is to completely exterminate the Indigenous population and replace it with a European-dominated society.




WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

**Richie Merino speaking at Al Quds Day rally in New York City, April 29.**

For the survival of collective humanity and the planet, we cannot allow uncontested power to remain in the hands of colonizers.

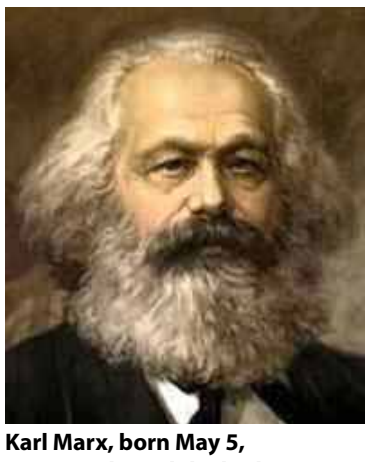
The South Bronx stands in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance, because our common enemies are capitalism, imperialism and white supremacy. Our loyalty should always be with oppressed peoples struggling against the U.S. empire and their puppet states like Israel.

Strength and victory to the resistance! Palestine will be free from the river to the sea! ❐

WORKERS WORLD
*editorial*

# Is the 'recovery' stalling?

Few tears were shed when hated Amazon announced April 28 that it lost $3.8 billion in the first quarter of 2022. This was the first loss it reported since 2015 and compares to a whopping $8.1 billion in profits in the first quarter 2021. The news did provoke a response on Wall Street as Amazon stock fell 10%.



**Karl Marx, born May 5, 1818, explained the built-in contradictions of capitalism and why the working class had to get rid of that system of exploitation.**

There are other signs that the so-called economic recovery is sputtering, including the unexpected report that the gross domestic product fell 1.4% in the first three months of 2022, following a robust growth of 5.7% in 2021. Economists admit the second-half growth was fueled less by consumer spending than by the need to replenish depleted inventories. Washington's massive COVID-19 stimulus bills gave consumer spending a shot in the arm — but for how long? Those funds are drying up.

The contradiction is that, with inflation at 8%, the Federal Reserve Bank is raising interest rates to further slow the economy and, hopefully, get prices under control.

All the economic fluctuations point to the inherent instability of capitalism.

### What's at stake for workers?

The working class has no reason to share in the exploiters' glee when profit taking goes up. It doesn't trickle down! But these trends matter to workers, because a recession means a loss of jobs. Then workers become more dependent on keeping the jobs they have. The "Great Resignation" and the purported labor shortage might be ending. If that happens it could be harder for workers to leverage demands for wages that keep up with inflation.

Typically a company like Amazon — or even a unionized company like General Motors — will take advantage of any negative economic news to justify an attack on the workers. Pay cuts (including elimination of "hero pay"), benefit cuts, less paid time off, speedups, outsourcing and downsizing are all in the capitalists' book of dirty tricks. Then when there's a return to profitability, workers have to fight to get back what they gave up.

When Amazon workers in Staten Island try to negotiate a good first contract, the company might likely start off with, "Well, you know, we lost a lot of money in the first quarter."

### Think tank economists stumble

Capitalist economists cannot explain the built-in contradictions of the system they uphold. For example, Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics wrote, "This is noise; not signal. The economy is not falling into recession." (cnbc.com) This kind of optimism precedes every recession and can be heard again before a recession becomes a depression.

But as class antagonisms sharpen, class consciousness rises and our class can smell the stench of capitalist decay — the whole system is rotten to the core!

That is the class truth that bourgeois economists are paid to obscure. Because when workers become conscious, they begin to organize, and unions are the most elemental expression of class awareness. Workers at Amazon and Starbucks — whose profits have fallen below expectations recently — are leading the way.

Fortunately in the 19th century, there was a true economist whose scientific theories still best explain the irreconcilable contradiction between labor and capital. He pointed out that profit is the "surplus value" the working class creates for the owning class. Part of the working day is spent working for wages, while the other part is spent generating wealth.

The birthday of that economist is May 5, 1818.

Red salute to Karl Marx! ☐

## *Letter to the editor*

# Prioritizing human needs

**By Sylvia Brown**

In a New Yorker article about the man who recently shot up a subway car in Brooklyn, it was mentioned that "it is hard to know whether increased police visibility would have deterred the kind of assault that the shooter allegedly carried out. Better mental health services may well have, though."

The same article included a study showing that people demonstrating signs of disturbance, but not hospitalized, and instead have mandated psychiatric care, are much less likely to be hospitalized later and are arrested less. However, at the same time mental health services of any kind are increasingly harder to come by in the U.S.

The only recommendation most local governments make is to increase the number of police. Yet many times, in the statistics about shooting deaths, the police are the shooters.

Many seek gun control as a solution, along with background checks to buy firearms. But statistics show that many mass shooters get guns anyway. In hindsight, before shooting anybody, most mass shooters displayed danger signals including social media posts, verbal diatribes against particular groups or long-held hatreds.

Investigations of many mass shooters suggest that the only audience available to them was other members of a hate group and sometimes family members — part of the same group. But what if they had talked to someone more empathetic and less responsive to violence before choosing to shoot anyone?

Studies of U.S. mental health services find over 50% of the population seeking mental health services, of any kind, can't find them. Mental health providers themselves have very little access to auxiliary services, such as residential treatment centers, halfway houses or rehab centers.

According to statistics, in 2020 57.2% of adults with a mental illness received no treatment in the U.S. The state ratio of mental health workforce in the U.S. to people needing help ranges from 180:1 in Massachusetts to 1,100:1 in Alabama.

The need for adequate mental health care is clearly not met anywhere in the U.S.

For a country whose main export is weaponry, the solution to most problems is more weapons. Need satisfaction has nothing to do with it. Not surprisingly, the rate of gun crimes per 100 people in the U.S. is the highest rate of all the countries in the world.

The only solution to the problem of gun crime in the U.S. is to change our orientation from profit to the satisfaction of human needs. ☐

## May Day means internationalism

# Support Workers World!

May Day. Workers. Resistance. Solidarity. Fight back.

May 1 is International Workers' Day. Although officially commemorated in 80 countries, it is not recognized in the U.S., where it originated in 1886 in Chicago during the struggle for the eight-hour workday. Its militant legacy is marked by protests by the global working class against capitalist exploiters. It is a day of solidarity with workers everywhere.

The class struggle is alive in the U.S., as shown by the hundreds of strikes in the last year. Workers are rising up in hospitals, schools, factories, coal mines, stores and eateries. Workers World applauds the successful worker-led union drives at a Staten Island Amazon facility and at about 30 Starbucks stores, with organizing drives at 220 or more eateries. These wins have spurred on more worker organizing around the country.

WW newspaper is partisan. We side with workers fighting for their rights. Their struggles are featured on our pages and in our bi-weekly column "On the Picket Line." Not only does WW write about worker organizing, but our staff members join rallies and picket lines.

On this May Day, WW supports all workers, organized and unorganized. We express solidarity with the millions of workers, especially Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrants, women, other gender-oppressed people and those who are disabled, low-wage earners, jobless or incarcerated.

WW agrees with May Day's socialist founders: End capitalism! Fight for socialism!

### Your help is needed!

If you appreciate our coverage, it's time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. It was established 45 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has helped sponsor the workers.org website. Throughout the pandemic when fewer print issues have been produced due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily at workers.org, where the weekly newspaper's PDF has been displayed. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this two-year health crisis.

For a donation of $60, $120 or $300 a year, you receive a WW newspaper subscription and one, two or three free subscriptions for friends, depending on donation. Read a free download of "What Road to Socialism?, published in 2020, at workers.org/books. Notify us if you want a paperback book.

Write checks (either monthly or annually) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Put "Supporter Program" in the memo line. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. ☐

Union Square
THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM
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Stop the Deportations! LEGALIZATION NOW! No worker is illegal!
¡LEGALIZACIÓN AHORA!
ABOLISH ICE & THE POLICE!
FREE MUMIA! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!
FIGHT RACISM & UNION BUSTING!
WORKERS.ORG

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

# With Gerardo Hernández of the Cuban 5 for May Day

**By Bill Sacks**

Greetings from Cuba. I am meeting with Gerardo Hernández of the Cuban 5 today. When he was asked about his time in prison, he told the international Brigadistas that one of the ways he had earned the respect of the other prisoners was by sharing his Workers World with them. When I brought him the latest issue he was so happy to see and insisted on a picture with the paper.

More later. On to May Day! ☐

# SCOTUS rules to exclude Puerto Ricans from SSI

**By Richard Merino**

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld a federal law that denies disability benefits to U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico. In an 8-1 ruling April 21, the court agreed with the Biden administration's argument that the federal government has the right to exclude residents of Puerto Rico from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a monthly cash payment for low-income elderly, blind or disabled people.

The law that established SSI, passed in 1972, granted eligibility only to residents of the 50 states and the District of Columbia and excluded Puerto Rico. The Supreme Court's decision reversed lower court rulings that sided with Jose Luis Vaello-Madero, a U.S. citizen born in Puerto Rico, who began collecting SSI benefits while living in New York after he developed debilitating health issues. His benefits were cut off, after the government discovered he had moved back to Puerto Rico, and the U.S. sued to recover roughly $28,000 in SSI benefits he received while living there.

The Supreme Court's racist and discriminatory ruling against Puerto Ricans came just one week before the Biden administration announced a $33 billion aid package to Ukraine, which includes pensions and other social aid payments to Ukrainian citizens. Had the court ruled in Vaello-Madero's favor, more than 300,000 Puerto Rico residents would become eligible at an estimated cost to the U.S. government of $2 billion annually.

Despite being U.S. citizens and paying U.S. taxes, the people of Puerto Rico have never been granted the same rights as U.S. citizens living on the mainland, and they have suffered under the colonial yoke imposed by the United States since its invasion in 1898. The Supreme Court's ruling comes at a time of rising inflation in Puerto Rico, with medicines becoming unaffordable to seniors and people with disabilities. Some cities and towns, such as Vieques, still lack a local hospital after Hurricane Maria destroyed vital infrastructure in 2017.

The people of Puerto Rico have the right to sovereignty and self-determination. Only with total independence from U.S. colonial rule, including freedom from debt traps and privatization schemes, can the people of Puerto Rico advance toward a society with a fairer system that treats all people as equals. The movement to free Puerto Rico from U.S. imperialism urgently needs international solidarity.

Abolish the racist U.S. Supreme Court! U.S. out of Puerto Rico! Cancel the debt! Free Puerto Rico now with reparations! ❐

# Housing is a human right!

**By G. Dunkel**

It was a spirited rally in City Hall Park, April 28 which expressed the anxiety that hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are feeling about their homes and caught the attention of the press. The rally called by Community Action for Safe Apartments featured Chinese, Spanish and English speakers, and it was militant.

Nearly a million apartments in New York City are covered by rent stabilization, which means their landlords are limited in raising the rent when the lease expires. This is the largest concentration of stabilized rental units in the United States.

The Rent Guideline Board (RGB), nine people appointed by the mayor, sets the rates. For the past decade, they have ranged from 0% to 1.5% for a one-year lease and no more than 2.5% for a two-year lease.

The RGB currently is considering raising the rates by 4.5% for a one-year and slightly less than 9% for a two-year.

There are at least 190,000 eviction cases in NYC courts, which are backed up because of moratoriums imposed while COVID-19 was raging. It's clear that the sharp increase in rent proposed by the RGB will drastically increase the number of evictions.

The RGB will make its final decision by the middle of June. The struggle is not over, and it definitely will grow. ❐

**Tenants, with signs against Mayor Eric Adams, rally against spikes in stabilized rent in New York City, April 28.**

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

MUNDO OBRERO

# ¿Se acaba la hegemonía del dólar estadounidense?

*Continúa de la página 12*

incluidos los países de la UE que apoyan las sanciones de Estados Unidos, paguen las exportaciones rusas con rublos.

Muchos países que no están actualmente bajo las sanciones de Estados Unidos se niegan a cumplir las sanciones impuestas a Rusia. Entre ellos se encuentran Brasil, India, China y Sudáfrica, que junto con Rusia forman los países BRICS. China y Rusia han impulsado el comercio bilateral en sus respectivas monedas.

Más de 40 países, que en conjunto suman un tercio de la población mundial, se enfrentan a sanciones económicas impuestas por Estados Unidos. Para eludir las sanciones estadounidenses, muchos de estos países están desarrollando nuevos programas de intercambio. Esto incluye la adhesión a los programas de desarrollo de la Iniciativa del Cinturón y la Ruta de China. Muchos países sancionados reciben envíos de combustible y grano necesarios de Rusia.

Muchos países que no están sometidos a sanciones se niegan a cumplir las sanciones impuestas por Estados Unidos y la UE a Rusia. Países como India, Pakistán, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sudáfrica, Kenia, Tanzania, Turquía, Emiratos Árabes Unidos, Arabia Saudí, Qatar, Brasil, Argentina, Bolivia y México se han negado a someterse a las medidas estadounidenses que perjudican sus propias relaciones comerciales.

En una entrevista concedida a The Cradle el 15 de abril, el economista ruso Sergey Glazyev declaró "La transición al nuevo orden económico mundial irá probablemente acompañada de la negativa sistemática a cumplir las obligaciones en dólares, euros, libras y yenes. En este sentido, no será diferente del ejemplo dado por los países emisores de estas monedas que consideraron oportuno robar las reservas de divisas de Irak, Irán, Venezuela, Afganistán y Rusia por valor de billones de dólares.

"Ya que Estados Unidos, Gran Bretaña, la UE y Japón se negaron a cumplir con sus obligaciones y confiscaron la riqueza de otras naciones que se encontraba en sus monedas, ¿por qué los demás países deberían estar obligados a devolverles el dinero y a atender sus préstamos?" (cradle.co) ❐

COMENTARIO DE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

# Otra vida, otra pérdida

**Por Mumia Abu-Jamal**

Vinieron a Estados Unidos para escapar las guerras inter-étnicas en la RDC, la República Democrática del Congo en África Central. Como muchos otros refugiados, pensaron que 'América' era la tierra de paz.

Los integrantes de la familia Lyoya se asentaron en Grand Rapids, Michigan y empezaron a vivir sus vidas de la misma manera que refugiados lo han hecho durante generaciones. Pero algo tan sencillo como un incidente de tránsito reveló los límites de la tierra de paz.

A sus 25 años, Patrick Lyoya enfrentó una detención de tránsito. Al parecer, se sintió inseguro cuando un policía detuvo su vehículo y por eso salió corriendo con el policía detrás, en una caliente persecución. Cuando el oficial saca una pistola paralizante, parece que Lyoya la cubre con sus manos, y con esto bloquea su efecto.

Alguien graba la trifulca con un teléfono celular, mostrando lo que parece ser el policía sobre la espalda de Lyoya, empujando su cabeza hacia abajo. Se escucha un disparo y Patrick Lyoya se va, muerto de un balazo en la nuca.

Una vez más, manejar siendo Negro es un delito capital.

Con amor, no miedo, soy Mumia Abu-Jamal.

*19 de abril de 2022*
*(c) '22 maj*
*Audio grabado por Prison Radio*
*Circulación por Fatirah Litestar01@aol.com*
*Traducción Amig@s de Mumia en México.*

WORKERS WORLD
# MUNDO OBRERO

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FOTO: STARBUCKS WORKERS UNITED

**Trabajadores de Starbucks realizan un paro por la seguridad, Ithaca, Nueva York, 16 de abril.**

## Mensaje del Primero de Mayo

# Trabajadores y oprimidos del mundo, ¡unídos!

*Los anunciantes corporativos cambian sus eslóganes regularmente. ¿Cuántos de nosotros recordamos "Busca los arcos dorados"? Podemos datarnos por lo que recordamos.*

Pero es una historia diferente con los eslóganes de la clase trabajadora. "Un perjuicio para uno es un perjuicio para todos" ha resistido la prueba del tiempo. Lo mismo ocurre con el coro del himno laboral más famoso de Estados Unidos: "Solidaridad para siempre, porque la unión nos hace fuertes".

El lema que ha residido en la cabecera de este periódico durante décadas es "¡Los trabajadores y los pueblos oprimidos del mundo se unen!". No es nuevo. Hace más de 100 años, V.I. Lenin modificó el famoso llamamiento del Manifiesto Comunista de 1848 añadiendo "pueblos oprimidos". Consideró necesario incluir a las masas de las naciones colonizadas que aún no formaban parte de la clase obrera, pero para las que sólo una revolución socialista podría traer la verdadera liberación nacional.

Hoy recordamos que la lucha de los más oprimidos por la liberación forma parte de la lucha por el socialismo. La solidaridad contra la opresión nacional -el racismo y la supremacía blanca en Estados Unidos- y otras formas de opresión especial es la forma en que construimos la unidad de la clase obrera. Es parte de la construcción de un movimiento global y de clase para derribar el sistema de explotación capitalista.

El Día Internacional de los Trabajadores — 1 de mayo, May Day — es cuando, en el mismo día en todo el mundo, los trabajadores demuestran su poder. El día fue declarado en 1889 en una conferencia socialista y reconoce una protesta masiva tres años antes, en la que los trabajadores, muchos de ellos inmigrantes, se manifestaron en la plaza Haymarket de Chicago por la jornada laboral de ocho horas. Ocho trabajadores y líderes sindicales fueron inculpados por el estado de Illinois por el asesinato de un policía; cinco pagaron el precio final.

### 'Hemos demostrado que podemos ganar'

Durante décadas, el Primero de Mayo, reconocido en todo el mundo, apenas se había celebrado en Estados Unidos. En 2005, el Movimiento del Millón de Trabajadores encabezó una marcha del Primero de Mayo en la ciudad de Nueva York. En 2006, millones de trabajadores inmigrantes celebraron una huelga general, una de las pocas huelgas políticas y, sin duda, la mayor de la historia laboral de Estados Unidos. El Primero de Mayo vuelve a conmemorarse cada año en todo el país.

Este último año ha sido testigo de un notable aumento del número de huelgas y campañas sindicales. En Estados Unidos, los trabajadores de Starbucks y Amazon han liderado el camino. Con campañas de organización en 220 o más tiendas de Starbucks, los trabajadores han solicitado una elección sindical a la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales en unas 30 tiendas, y hasta ahora el sindicato ha ganado en todas ellas menos en una. El Sindicato de Trabajadores de Amazon (ALU) ganó su primera — y definitivamente no la última- elección en un almacén de Staten Island. Se trata de un sindicato dirigido por negros con muchos miembros inmigrantes de todo el mundo.

En una declaración conjunta del Primero de Mayo, Starbucks Workers United y el ALU dijeron: "Desde Buffalo, Nueva York, hasta Memphis, Tennessee, pasando por Staten Island, Nueva York, y Bessemer, Alabama, Seattle, Mesa, Arizona, y en todas partes, seguimos siendo persistentes y estamos decididos a seguir luchando por un lugar de trabajo mejor y un mundo mejor. Con muchas victorias importantes, hemos demostrado que podemos ganar. Pero sólo es posible cuando nos unimos en nuestros intereses comunes".

El año pasado, el número total de afiliados a los sindicatos en Estados Unidos disminuyó en 300.000 miembros, continuando una pauta de declive de décadas. Pero en lo que va de año, en casi 1.000 centros de trabajo diferentes, los trabajadores han presentado una solicitud de elección sindical. La tendencia es al alza, con más de 200 solicitudes en abril. (nlrb.gov)

La suerte de los trabajadores está a punto de ser revertida por un nuevo ascenso de la clase obrera liderado por los jóvenes. Esto es parte de un resurgimiento global de la lucha de clases, con huelgas masivas en India, Haití, Colombia, Francia y otros países durante el año pasado.

El llamado a la acción de Lenin no está fuera de moda. ¡Trabajadores y pueblos oprimidos del mundo, unidos! ¡No tenéis nada que perder más que vuestras cadenas! ☐

# ¿Se acaba la hegemonía del dólar estadounidense?

**Por Betsey Piette**

¿Existe un movimiento global para abandonar la dependencia del dólar estadounidense? ¿Está el mundo asistiendo al fin de la hegemonía económica de Estados Unidos?

La perspectiva de la desdolarización de la economía mundial ha sido estudiada por los economistas desde hace tiempo. La mayoría admite que no es una cuestión de si ocurrirá, sino de cuándo. Desde el año 2000, el control de Estados Unidos sobre el intercambio mundial ha ido cayendo. La recesión económica estadounidense de 2008 aceleró este proceso, ya que un mayor número de países cuestionó la inversión en mercados estadounidenses de riesgo.

La ampliación de las sanciones estadounidenses está alimentando un rápido cambio en el intercambio mundial de divisas que amenaza la hegemonía del dólar. Las últimas sanciones estadounidenses dirigidas a Rusia pueden ser el punto de inflexión, porque muchos países perderán tanto económicamente al obedecer las sanciones que se niegan a obedecerlas. Además, al confiscar los fondos de los países que han invertido en dólares depositados en bancos imperialistas, Estados Unidos ha obligado a los países a replantearse cómo almacenar sus reservas.

Un informe del Fondo Monetario Internacional del 24 de marzo encontró "una disminución de la participación del dólar en las reservas internacionales desde el cambio de siglo". Más de 46 bancos centrales han diversificado cada vez más sus tenencias. El estudio del FMI reveló que el descenso del dólar no supuso un aumento del uso de la libra esterlina,

el yen o el euro, sino de la moneda oficial de la República Popular China, el yuan renminbi.

### El patrón oro y el dólar

Al finalizar la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el imperialismo estadounidense dominaba la economía mundial, ya que poseía la mayor parte del oro y era el acreedor del mundo.

En una reunión de 44 países en Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, en 1944, los participantes acordaron fijar sus monedas al dólar, que a su vez se fijó al oro a 35 dólares la onza.

Hasta 1971, Estados Unidos mantuvo fijo el precio del oro en dólares y ajustó la oferta de dólares para mantener la confianza en la futura convertibilidad del oro.

Enfrentado a una deuda masiva por la guerra de Vietnam, el presidente estadounidense Richard Nixon sacó al dólar del patrón oro en agosto de 1971, para evitar el drenaje de las reservas de oro de Estados Unidos.

En "The Coming Global Financial Revolution", Ellen Brown señala: "El valor del dólar se desplomó entonces en relación con otras monedas en las bolsas mundiales. Para apuntalarlo, Nixon y el Secretario de Estado Henry Kissinger llegaron a un acuerdo con Arabia Saudí y los países de la OPEP para que la OPEP vendiera petróleo sólo en dólares, y que los dólares se depositaran en los bancos de Wall Street y la City de Londres. A cambio, Estados Unidos defendería militarmente a los países de la OPEP". (Scheer Post, 5 de abril)

Otros países que todavía tenían grandes reservas de dólares estadounidenses acabaron invirtiendo en bonos del Tesoro de Estados Unidos, utilizados a su vez por este país para financiar sus bases militares en todo el mundo. Entrevistado en Resistencia Popular el 29 de marzo, el economista Michael Hudson explicó: "Así que, básicamente, los bancos centrales [extranjeros] tienen que mantener sus ahorros armándolos, militarizándolos, prestándolos a Estados Unidos, para seguir gastando en el extranjero....

"[E]sto es lo que era la hegemonía del dólar, y era un paseo gratis. Y todo terminó el miércoles pasado cuando Estados Unidos se apoderó de las reservas de Rusia, después de haberse apoderado de las reservas extranjeras de Afganistán y de las reservas extranjeras de Venezuela y de otros países....

"Si la forma de tener la hegemonía del dólar es que otros países depositen dinero en tus bancos y manejen su comercio de petróleo entre ellos financiándolo en dólares, pero de repente te apoderas de todos sus dólares y no les dejas usar los bancos de Estados Unidos para pagar su petróleo y su comercio entre ellos, entonces van a cambiar a un sistema diferente".

### Sanciones y guerras

Los jefes de los países ricos en petróleo, Saddam Hussein en Irak y Muammar Gaddafi en Libia, intentaron establecer un nuevo sistema financiero respaldado por oro y separado del FMI. Tanto Irak como Libia se enfrentaron a sanciones. Ambos líderes fueron vilipendiados y ejecutados o asesinados.

Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña invadieron Irak en 2003. Estados Unidos y la OTAN bombardearon Libia. Ahora, el presidente Joe Biden ha pedido públicamente la destitución del presidente ruso Vladimir Putin.

Washington impuso sanciones a Rusia y está obligando a otros países, especialmente a los aliados de la Unión Europea, a reconfigurar sus economías para acatar estas sanciones económicas extremas.

Después de haber sufrido inicialmente un duro golpe en su economía con una importante caída del valor del rublo, Rusia ha estado tomando medidas para deshacerse de los activos en dólares bajo control de Estados Unidos.

Rusia es uno de los mayores exportadores de petróleo, gas, trigo y fertilizantes del mundo. Como los socios comerciales normales de Rusia siguen necesitando productos básicos de este país, ahora buscan monedas de pago alternativas al dólar, como el rublo ruso, el yuan chino y la rupia india. Deben hacerlo para eludir las sanciones de Estados Unidos y la UE.

Hudson declaró: "Esta es una guerra para encerrar a los aliados [de Estados Unidos] para que no puedan comerciar con Rusia. No pueden comprar petróleo ruso. Deben depender del petróleo [estadounidense] por el que tendrán que pagar tres o cuatro veces más". Señala que si no se les permite comprar fertilizantes a Rusia, los países deben pagar más por el gas natural licuado estadounidense o sufrir pérdidas de cosechas del 50%.

Rusia insiste ahora en que las "naciones no amigas",

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